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AUTHOR Thomas, Alan M.
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ABSTRACT

This brief discusses the difficulties created by the lack of clear relationship between formal and adult education systems in Canada, the chaotic conjunction of the two systems--one pressing upward and the other pressing downward; and proposes continuing education as a solution to the problem posed by the present educational structure. A study of the characteristics of the two educational systems shows that while each could offer experience and method to the other, they are different and encroaching on each other; and the sharing is happening with uneven unawareness, and without plan or evaluation. To facilitate the sharing, the systems must be joined consciously and intelligently into a system of "continuing education" which would base its theoretical framework on the fact that human beings are capable of learning different things in different ways throughout their entire lives; all citizens are entitled to a certain level of education at public expense; and that learning is work and students are fully participating citizens. Such a system would put a premium on the operation of individual choice about learning as early in one's life as possible. (PT)

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A BRIEF

on The Concept of Continuing Education

submitted to

The Commission of Educational Planning

Province of Alberta

The Commission of Post-Secondary Education

Province of Ontario

The Commission on Post-Secondary Education

Province of Prince Edward Island

by

Alan M. Thomas, Ph. D.

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INTRODUCTION

Three Canadian Provinces now have educational investigating bodies exclusively or in part devoted to problems of post-secondary education. The immediate needs for such investigations, the rivalry of new and long-standing institutions, the rising cost per student, the confusion existing among and between institutions related to overlapping programs, ambiguity of credentials, transfer of information and students - all are apparent and preoccupying. At the same time these investigations take place aginst a mounting tumult of criticism and unrest from within the existing institutions, old and new, where traditional authorities, the status of learner and teacher, and the purpose and function of these institutions are being subjected to relentless and often violent scrutiny.

However, it is to be most profoundly hoped that these bodies will not confine their attention and recommendations to these pressing and apparent issues, but will allow themselves to reflect upon the deeper and more pervasive trends in Canada, and in all industrialized societies, that lie at the root of the developments that have precipitated such investigations. The problems to which these bodies must address themselves are far more pervasive and revolutionary than those taken up by the various Royal Commission on Education that existed in the previous two decades, with one exception, that of the "Parent Commission" in the Province of Quebec. While the present bodies do not exactly enter upon a virgin territory where no institutional development has taken place, nevertheless they do face a social environment far more flexible, far less entrenched, and therefore more susceptible to imaginative intervention and experimental leadership. The ambiguity of the terrain that faces them has its disadvantages in that it is much less easy to gather hard data of the sort associated with systems of education of a more familiar and formal nature. The anxieties of those persons engaged in this area due to partially undeveloped career prospects, unassimilated

institutions, insecurities of both status and income will further contribute to the difficulties. Yet all this is in my opinion merely evidence of the existing opportunity to reinforce and provide direction for trends in Canadian education that will truly provide for a modern and civilized society in the remaining years of this century. What conclusions these bodies provide will influence all the rest of Canada.

1.- There is no need to repeat the arguments by which these bodies were established. Nor do I mean to suggest anything but pleasure that they exist. What this brief proposes to do is to try to describe, and in part explain one way of conceiving of problem(s) that face them which in turn will suggest certain specific solutions to these problems.

Basic to the argument will be one, now clearly accepted, if yet to be fully acted upon, assumption. This is, that the need for access to educational opportunity by all ages outside the conventional group of young now dramatically exceeds the resources of the formal system of education, as those resources are presently utilized and deployed. Such innovations as the federally supported Manpower Program, the night-school and evening-class offerings of public educational institutions, the increasing movement for "community use of school buildings and resources" are indications of the response of the public to this fact. But they still remain slight in scope, starved in resource, haphazard in plans and operations, and without any inclusive educational or administrative philosphy which would unify and clarify their place in an educational system.

On the other hand the private sector for its own purposes has in the past forty years established a large, exceedingly well financed, and highly various system of teaching and learning. This system is growing steadily. While the variety involved in all of these developments would seem to suggest the lack of systematic character compared to the formal system, I would argue that these activities are identifiably and describably to a degree sufficient to argue for the existence of a system or systems. At the bottom, there is the gradual but steady emergence of nursery schools, cooperative play schools, experimental schools, all of which are appearing under a great variety of auspices and for a great variety of purposes. From the end of the formal system, occuring as it does for a great many between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, an even greater multiplicity of activities is to be found. Every industrial or commercial enterprise of any size maintains training and educational activities of a variety of sorts; professional groups, associations, churches, labour unions and thousands of other agencies provide educational or learning opportunities. While some intersect with the formal system at different points, and as I shall point out later the emergence of "Community College" has intensified both the opportunities and the problems associated with such intersection, most carry out their own affairs without contact with the formal system and without contact with each other.

The fact is that there are now two systems of education in Canada. I am not suggesting there is anything wrong with this emergence in whole or in part. Neither will I argue for the spread of one big "system" if system is to be interpreted in the sense of what is now included within the word "formal". What I will argue is that it makes no sense at all for systems of learning to be developed and carried on in ignorance of each other. If learning is important to the society between the ages five years and sixteen years it is important at any age regardless of under whose auspices it occurs. Freedom to learn, which also means freedom to teach, must be guaranteed.

One aspect of the present unfunctional relationship between these systems is that a distressing proportion of individuals in Canada, namely those who start as financially, culturally and educationally deprived, are being deprived of those freedoms. While no one will deny that some of the problems of the child-centered elementary school in intervening between the child and the economic and cultural circumstances of his family cannot be solved by that school alone, what is not realized is that the system of education available to adults, for a possible second chance, is not effectively remedial at all. In fact its major effect is the reverse. A person who has done well in the formal system gets the major chances in the adult system, the "failure" finds little help in either. Furthermore, what is not realized is that the failure of the adult system to provide anything for the deprived parent, reduces the likelihood

that the formal system will be able to do much for the child.

This is but one example of the difficulties created by the lack of clear relationship between the two systems. They are both failing the same group of individuals. There are many others, indicating that whatever difficulty is created for the educator in trying to relate them, the real loser is the ordinary citizen who remains quite unaware of many opportunities that either do or could exist, despite the fact that he has been exposed to a minimum of ten years of formal schooling.

It used to be held, and still is by some, that if we had a first class system of elementary and secondary education, we would not need adult education or institutions of further education with the exception of the universities for a small number of people. This view must now be discarded. Evidence now exists to support the view that the more effective the early systems, the greater need for further opportunity. But while the notion has been discarded in theory, the need to articulate the two systems remains not only unaccomplished but largely unconceived. This in my opinion is precisely the task facing the investigating bodies.

2.- Population. I would interject at this stage some comments on demographic forecasts that lend some urgency to the situations. Each of the investigating bodies will have its own population forecasts, and they will obviously vary from province to province. In general my interpretation of what figures have been available are that while nearly half of the national population

is to be found at twenty-one or under, this proportion will decline steadily throughout the rest of the century. The numbers of young who have pressed so relentlessly on the elementary and secondary schools since the early 1950's are now entering the post-school period of their lives, that period when they become candidates for employment and some form of adult education. Not only are they greater in number than before, they enter an adult society with far more demands on them for further learning, and they enter it as a group with more formal education than ever before. This last fact means that they are more likely to seek opportunities for further education than previous groups have done. And, they will, as they progress upwards in age, continue to do so. The next twenty years will see then a much larger group of adults with larger needs and interests in continuing their education.

I might add to this fact that members of this group have grown up in a tumultuous period in Canadian education, and either witnessed or participated in much greater freedom as students, and in ideas about the rights of students. One suspects that as adult students, or potential adult students they will be very much less diffident and grateful than have adult students in the past. They are more likely to insist on further education as a right rather than as a favour, and may pursue some articulation of their own. But this will be true only of the more aggressive and one suspects the already favoured among the population. If the present investigating groups fail to provide

the overall linking then the bulk of the citizens will continue in lives less satisfying and contributary than they need to be.

3.- The task then, is one of facing the unexpected and chaotic conjunction of two systems of education, one pressing upward, the other pressing downward. Apart from their shared devotion to learning, they are quite different in almost every other respect. Each has advantages and disadvantages, each has a lengthy experience appropriate to the problems that had to be solved. Some of it is transferable, a good deal of it is not. To create effective and enduring relationships between the two, each will have to change its practices and concepts. Some of this change is already taking place, though by and large it has not been universally welcomed. The two systems are those already referred to: the formal, basically youth-centered system, K-12 including university and the community college, or technical institute for some; and the formal-informal adult (and to a degree nursery system) including everything and every age not catered to in the formal system. Functionally and officially the two overlap in a great many places, but it is a conjunction of primacy and opportunism, not one of systematic and inclusive consideration. In his contacts with the formal system, the adult student has traditionally received what was left over; unused buildings after dark, curricula prepared for the young, moonlighting teachers who have already done a day's work and so on. Again I am not criticizing the efforts of those who have laboured to secure even this much. I am simply indicating some of the

experience and resulting attitudes that arise from the relationship of one system to the other.

4.- Before exploring the consequences of accepting either of the alternatives, the upward extension of one, or the downward extension of the other, I propose to list some of the major characteristics of each system. It should be observed that no one of these characteristics applies to every aspect of the particular system, as well as to the attitudes and expectations of those regarding them from the "outside".

The formal system, that involving K-12 plus university, community college, and technical institute possesses the following characteristics:

a) it is essentially a "preparatory" system, based on the assumption that it prepares for or anticipates experience to follow at some unspecified time. The learners are asked to accept hypothetical possibilities.

b) it is to a large degree a "compulsory" system. Learners for the most part do not choose to participate, or are assumed unable to choose, and attend under pressure from law, or parents, or both.

c) it is a custodial system, in that the personnel assert the authority of parents or other powers. The student is a "ward" of the system, dependent on it, and unable to assert the complete rights and responsibilities of an independent citizen.

d) it is almost entirely financed from public money, with participation by the learner, financially, only in the higher reaches of the system. It is subject to all the usual controls and hazards related to money secured from tax income.

e) it is a highly centralized system, with varying degrees of participation by different authorities at different stages, and for the most part clearly visible in all its parts.

f) it is a rational system to the extent that its offerings are available in ordered stages based on both age and capacity, with one level of experience leading to another. The existence of a planned and developmental curriculum rising in some sort of spiral from one point to the next is one of its chief characteristics.

g) with some exceptions, namely the universities and to a lesser degree still the community college, it is a self reinforcing system. Teachers are products of the system and accredited by it. They are not teachers or administrators other than as determined by the system itself.

h) the experiences to which the learners are exposed, that is the curriculum, are not determined by the learners, but by both external and internal sources of decision which taken all together make up some discernible public or state policy.

i) the experience of the learner is a mixture of collective and individual experience. Almost all learning is done in large groups of learners defined by age and relative maturity, while evaluation or measurement of success or failure is based on a supposed relationship between the individual and the institution, not on a relationship with his learning group, except perhaps statistically by means of normal curves and the like.

j) the system is a legitimizing one, acting for the society in a formal way as a system of testing, classification, and training or skill-developing. The society has invested it with immense power over individuals and their families, which it deliberately diffuses throughout a complicated system of political and professional control.

k) the system is extensive and wealthy in an entrepreneurial

sense. It owns substantial and highly visible real estate in land and buildings, it expends publicly large amounts of money, and it employs large and diverse sorts of individuals.

The adult, or informal-formal system manifests the following characteristics, subject to the caveats registered at the beginning of this paragraph:

a) it is essentially a non-preparatory system, rather, a "real-time" system. It tends to be dominated by learners attempting to solve problems that are of immediate concern.

b) it is a non-compulsory system, though different degrees of "felt" pressure to participate are experienced by the learners. For example an individual can choose not to take part in the "Manpower" program if he wishes to take his chances of remaining unemployed.

c) participants for the most part are fully responsible, or held fully responsible in all other aspects of their lives. They are husbands, wives, employers, voters, citizens, etc., whether they are attending a class or not.

d) finances vary enormously, from programs financed entirely from tuition fees or contributions of participants, programs financed by large private organizations, to mixtures of these and other practices where loans, deductions, etc., are added.

e) it is a highly decentralized system, existing in one sense wherever one or more persons decide there is something they wish to teach or to be taught.

f) curriculum is largely determined by the learner or teacher in each individual case, and is rarely examinable or transferable to some other school or situation.

g) success or failure is largely in terms of the group involved, and is not easily communicable throughout the society. Such relationships as contribute to making such evaluations more communicable almost always take place by means of contact with the formal system.

h) the teacher exists if he can find a group of learners willing

to attend him, and vice versa, rather than either being dependent upon formally approved credentials or circumstances.

i) what evaluation exists tends to be immediate and short term, largely in terms of whether the learner can in fact perform adequately what was intended. Judgement as often rebounds on the teacher for having failed to teach, as on the learner for being incapable of undisciplined.

j) groups of individuals tend to be determined by interest, rather than age or some measure of maturity. While life styles and cycles do tend to introduce some uniformity, as for example, women who are returning to the labour force having raised their children, diversity is very much greater within learning groups than in the formal system.

k) circumstances, settings and methods vary enormously, each enhancing the other. The average resources are very much less than the average resources available to the formal system.

l) teachers in the formal sense rarely exist. Teaching is performed for the most part by individuals who wish to teach a particular subject or skill and who occupy their time otherwise at other occupations.

m) the decentralization and non-compulsory nature of the enterprise means widely dispersed students and widely unsolved problems of this system is that of information, a problem that hardly preoccupies the formal system to any extent.

n) the system is to a large degree invisible, being so widely dispersed in time and space. It is largely invisible to the formal system though one can hardly argue that the reverse is true.

There are many other characteristics that could be advanced as peculiar to one or other of these two systems. The point is that they are different, and they are encroaching on each other. Obviously each possesses attributes that are appropriate

to its undertakings, and each could offer experience and method to the other. This sharing is in fact happening, though with uneven awareness and without plan or evaluation. They must now be joined, consciously, and intelligently.

It is my opinion that this cannot be done without accepting two points of view with which to examine the entire educational activities of Canada. In the first place we must move away from talking about "education" which carries with it all sorts of formal and institutional nuances and begin to talk about "learning". Learning is what individuals do, and is the object of the enterprise of "education". The question is what is it we wish to encourage what individuals to learn at what periods in the life of the individual and in the life of the society? As a democratic society we must of course admit, and in fact you have to do so regardless of what society you happen to be, the significance of what it is that any individual wishes to and is willing to learn under any specific circumstances.

Once this question is faced, then all the other issues fall into place, since we are now operating with the physics of the system rather than a series of engineering activities.

Having once accepted this point the second point of view becomes obvious. We must apply the concept of "continuing education" to the series of problems that the concentration on learning presents to us. In this case we abandon the separation between formal and informal, between child-centered and adult education, and apply a concept which allows for an educational

system co-existent with the individual life cycle. This system does not separate learning from work but acknowledges that they are different kinds of work. It involves an educational enterprise as a resource to which individual citizens turn, sometimes at their own expense, sometimes at the community expense, but to which they turn quite freely at different intervals throughout their entire lives. Working with these two assumptions, the two existing systems can be joined in a rational, clear and consistent manner. But without making this "quantum jump" of the imagination, little but patching and plastering can be expected.

5.- The remainder of the brief is devoted to expanding the implications of the previous argument, and examining some of the alternatives. I have already observed that the two existing systems are pressing hard upon one another, the formal system pressing up, the adult system pressing down. By implication I am suggesting that to continue to allow this to happen without rethinking the system courts disaster.

6.- The formal system, as previously described, presses upwards in a variety of ways, largely in the sense that it has in recent years encompassed more and more older people within systematic activities designed expressly for the young under specific circumstances. Examples of this are the increased number of part-time adult students pursuing certification by means of procedures that are internal to institutions based on the young as students. Most of these opportunities are being made

available on a hit or miss basis by the institutions with little consideration for nature of these students. For the most part the cost is born almost entirely by the students, so that income and proximity to an urban center are the basis of access. There are notable exceptions to this rule but not many and they do not exist on any systematic basis.

The most dramatic example, and the source of most of these present investigations, has been the creation in six provinces of variations on the "community college". Here, two years of further formal education is offered to a group in the population that heretofore had no access to education at this age. The numbers are large, and have grown at very great rate, but what is more important, the cost per student, is forcing a crisis.

It can be argued that what we have done is to extend formal education by two to three years for the first time since the introduction of the public secondary school about fifty years ago. During that fifty years, more and more students have remained longer and longer in the secondary school until they have exhausted its opportunities. At the same time the demands of the society, largely of the economy, have outstripped what the secondary school could offer as preparation. Thus the formal system with all its preparatory, custodial, centralized characteristics has been extended two to three years as the "community college". At the same time the cost per student of this system has increased dramatically. While as a society we can probably absorb this as a legitimate community cost,

the logic or illogic of the developments cannot escape any educational planner.

The demands now being made on "community colleges" to provide either all sorts of short and long term educational services, or to conform to the hierarchical formal system and become more exclusive and "university oriented" suggest that, given the increased rate of educational change, it will be necessary in fifteen years to add another two years. The cost of doing this, plus the manpower demands for teaching and administration as organized in the formal system, plus the fact that such developments will always fall short of overtaking contemporary development, suggest the limits of such elaboration. Reflections on such a system stretching eventually to grades "nineteen and twenty" stimulate the ridiculous, and bankruptcy. Such a system would be simply too cumbersome, and too expensive.

Immediately it becomes apparent that one cannot even justify the introduction of this two to three year extension without rethinking the entire system. What is it that specific individuals need to learn at what stage in their lives? What sort of system can accomodate the mingling of individual choice and social needs, and the mingling of individual financial participation and community investment? When someone learns something new, which benefits most, the individual or the community, and to what measure? We have answered these questions in the past with respect to selected groups. We must ask and answer them again in the light of new circumstances.

7.- I would point out at this stage the anomaly represented by the terminology with which most of these investigations are associated. The term "post-secondary" seems undeniably associated with the pushing upwards of the formal system, and has provided perhaps a bias to the thought of these investigations which ought to be exposed for reflection. If the term "secondary education" means to suggest a system of the formal type described, largely preoccupied with the young, then the contradiction is substantial. For what we are doing by labelling everything else as "post-secondary" is defining an immeasurably larger and more varied educational enterprise in terms of a smaller and more limited one. There is some educational precedent for this, for example the terms "graduate" and "undergraduate" but that hardly seems sufficient reasons for putting up with so misleading a term.

If on the other hand "secondary education" means to refer to an educational process leading to the grasp of certain knowledge or the ability to perform certain skills, then the term "post-secondary" couples with the interest in adult education is even more misleading. We are concerned that everyone should have the opportunity at some stage in life to acquire these particular skills and the specific knowledge. When they do and under what circumstances is germane to the affairs being investigated. Se we are concerned with "post-secondary" which probably ought to be termed "tertiary" for all, but I am also concerned with what skills ought to be included in "secondary education, and how they can be made accessible to the entire population.

It is worth noting that Canadian universities

have never used the term "post-secondary" until financial and presumably political considerations forced them to admit inclusion into the category. It is clearly ridiculous to define them in this way.

8.- The manner in which the informal-adult system has been pressing on the formal system is more subtle in character and more various in process but nonetheless effective. To a large degree almost all of the revolutionary demands being made by students in terms of rights and freedom to control are practices traditionally familiar to adult education. I am not arguing that the transfer has been direct, but the fact that it is and has been possible to be a "student" that is to engage in some disciplined learning, without being a total dependent on the institution, is a fact that has not been lost on the parties to the present debates within the formal institutions. The freedom to teach as well as the freedom to learn is an idea that has been pressing steadily downwards.

A variety of methods long familiar among adult educators have begun to be more and more encountered within the formal precincts. The idea that learning should be both institutionally and psychologically dependent upon the choice of the learner is fundamental to adult education, and is also characteristic of much of the reform taking place within the formal system. The demand that the subject matter be more relevant to the present life of the student, rather than preparatory and based on the experience of the adult, is

another characteristic of the insistence of the university and college young. The growth of the underground university in various forms, wherein groups of students acting on their interests hire the services of a person who will help them learn what they wish to learn is an idea with roots in the early history of western universities, but one that is basic to adult education.

There are other examples that one could cite, but the point of this is that these innovations in the formal system are being introduced without very much thought of their significance for an overall scheme of education. While the adult system has up to the present gloried in and contributed much by its dependence upon the freedom of learners, and the relationship of learning and living, the formal system has on its part contributed a great deal through discipline, consistency of application and the pursuit of long range and sometimes unpopular goals. A carefully conceived system of continuing education would provide opportunities for both qualities. At the moment we are in danger of the worst of both worlds.

9.- Continuing Education. The term "continuing education" is a relatively new term in the Canadian educational dictionary and demands some explanation. It occasionally occurs in the company of the term "continuous learning" and taken together both seem rather exhausting. However the terms are used, the functional origin are impeccable. Not only do they occur frequently, though just as frequently unnoticed by Canadian

educators, in the seminal documents of western educational theory - for example Plato's "Republic", and all of John Dewey's work, but current theories of political and social history indicate that ruling classes have depended for their survival by engaging in relatively informal but enormously effective systems of continuous learning. Once western societies harnessed their economic and social systems to science and technology with the dependence upon continuing material change implied, the need to extend such systems of continuous learning to the entire population has become startlingly evident. Whatever the ethics of the development - this area is desperately in need of thoughtful investigation - the facts are that to remain a society with some consonance of desires and satisfactions, the bulk of the population must be engaged in changing itself and its circumstances constantly. Experience with learning as a child is now not a preparation for "work and adulthood" unless it is accepted that both of those terms involve frequent engagement in further learning. The only real judgement to bring against the child-centered system, is, "does it prepare an individual to continue to learn under a great variety of circumstances?" At present one cannot be very optimistic that it does to the degree that it might.

The development of participation in learning as a "norm" of contemporary life can be illustrated by examining the current concern and exasperated fascination with "poverty" and the "poor". A close inspection indicates that the poor are precisely

those individuals in the society who are not, for a variety of reasons, engaged in, or are not capable of becoming engaged in learning and change. In a society dedicated to coping with change, self-inflicted, the unchanging are potential revolutionaries. Again there are ethical questions here, largely unexamined, but the provision of opportunities for learning seem the principal way that a society can assist its citizens to deal with change with dignity and self-determination.

"Continuing Education" which is the term I prefer to use in this brief, has been introduced to Canada largely from international circles. UNESCO for example has chosen to use the French term "éducation permanente" which is translated as "life-long education". My preference, whatever violence it does to the English language is for the term "continuing education". By this I mean an educational system which acknowledges, in fact bases itself upon the fact that human beings are capable of learning different things in different ways throughout their entire lives, and that this human potential or resource is of immense importance to any civilized society that wishes to survive. It also acknowledges that individuals can be persuaded to learn things, but they cannot be coerced. If they are coerced they will pervert the significance of the teaching, and quickly come to hate the society that coerces them. Such a system in such a society then assumes not only that people can

learn throughtout their lives, but that they will learn what is necessary for them to learn if resources are put at their disposal. And, it goes without saying that they will learn what they see as necessary when they see it to be necessary.

The risk involved in such a system is obvious. But in my opinion it is a safer risk than trying to inculcate values and skills at the beginning of life which we hope will last. The individuals with whom we run the greatest risk in such a system of voluntary extended learning are the ones with whom we are failing now in our compulsory system. With the new system, we will not only relieve the present system of some of its greatest pressures but we will provide ourselves with much greater flexibility in dealing with the varieties of interest and ability among our people.

The main point I am making is that a system of "continuing education" cannot be tacked on inadvertently or surreptitiously to the present formal system. The concept requires a general application to all of the educational enterprises of the society, though it does allow for the gradual introduction of specific phases, a necessity in a large vested system such as Canada possesses at the present time.

10.- It is obviously the opinion of this brief that an argument of substance for a system of continuing education is unnecessary. The evidence in support of it has either already

been presented or is obvious to the various members of the investigating bodies. However it might be helpful to supply a brief list of demands for learning outside of the formal system now being responded to in a variety of patchwork manners.

- need to manage new technical developments within industry. (Already being handled on a large scale by large industry but not by small technically sophisticated companies. The renting of university faculty for these purposes is already a source of student and faculty unrest, for good reason).

- need for professional upgrading (perish the term) now being tackled in a major way within professions, and requiring the introduction of concepts of continuing education.

- need for all sorts of para-professional refreshment now being tackled gingerly by community colleges but against real obstacles.

- needs of women wishing to re-enter the labour force which means access to counselling and training both during the child-bearing and rearing period and afterwards. Here lies one of the stimuli for nursery schools and day-care centers.

- needs of redundant workers now handled by Manpower Program which is employment rather than educational legislation.

- increasing psychological need to combine learning with application, insisting on more use of cooperative schemes such as the University of Waterloo Cooperative Engineering Program. The great need here is of more flexible time periods both daily and annually.

- need for certain groups in the population, the retired, the unemployed, the young to have access to learning opportunities of individual choice - "leisure".

- need of new Canadians for language training, and other citizenship skills.
- need for new groups, largely urban, the poor, community groups to learn skills of collective self-direction and participation.
- need for learning technical innovations in agriculture, forestry, etc.

Some or all of these needs are coping with to a degree, but not at all within a coherent system of education. We would be both foolish and short-sighted to suppose that such needs are likely to diminish, or that it would be desirable if they did. While they obviously present problems to be solved, equally they present enormous opportunities to be realized. A society that does and can depend upon the learning potential of its citizens throughout their lives is a society of boundless prospects.

11.- I have been arguing that only a system of continuing education will make the articulation of the two existing systems possible and provide us with a realistic system of education for all of Canada. It should be realized, that, it is the purpose of this common brief to all three groups, that the fact of continuity must apply in all provinces to at least a minimal degree, if we are to maintain any educational support for the unity of the country. The provinces that do institute such systems will I think establish a long lead over others in terms of migration since they will be the easiest to move among and within.

I realize also that not all three of the investigating groups is officially concerned with all levels of education. However, the problem of introducing the concept of continuing education within a provincial system is not dissimilar to the problems of introducing it in a state with ten official systems. Since the "post-secondary" system is largely entrusted with training the leadership for all of the rest of the systems, formal and informal, it does seem that that is the most likely place to make a start. However, the following comments on the lower levels are introduced to suggest that the content of any introductory program based on the concept might involve.

12.- A system of continuing education may be considered as proceeding along roughly three dimensions, what is taught, how it is taught, and who is taught at any one time or under any one set of circumstances. A preliminary examination of the present formal system suggests a sharply defined position with respect to whom is taught, namely the young, some variation as to what is taught, and limited variations as to how it is taught. The how in this case included the use of compulsion, school buildings, class rooms, time-tables, text books, examinations and the like. These last two are of course changing in relation to each other, but the big break must come with the definition of whom is taught.

The custodial functions now performed by the elementary and to a lesser degree the secondary schools as a prime function of a specialized industrial society mean of course a high proportion of definable young in those portions of the system, with a high concentration on what is best presented to the young - manual

skills, language and number skills, social concepts related to the community, etc. The specific content would under such a system be relatively flexible since it would be addressed to what was of active concern to those young, rather than representing an attempt to prepare them for possibly useful skills and understanding that might be demanded of them in the future. What would change radically in a preliminary stage related to the concept of continuing education would be largely a range of attitudes, which would in turn lead to changes in administrative practices and other developments.

A.- The elementary and secondary system is largely a preparatory system based on a last-chance philosophy. If we don't teach it to them now while we have them under our control they will never learn it. The result is the frantic overcrowding of the secondary curriculum in particular. It has become increasingly a grab-bag of skills and comprehensions that every legitimate or illegitimate special interest has managed to install. Driver-training is a first class example of a responsibility thrust upon the schools as a matter of convenience with little thought to any other principle.

The last-chance philosophy has been based on some real economic factors related to the last stages of an industrial one, but it has been legitimized by two thoroughly outdated educational assumptions. The first is that youth is the best time to teach someone anything, which is demonstrably untrue, and second that once freed from a compulsory system individuals will not learn what they need to know, an equally questionable assumption. What is proposed is the replacement of this view by a series of new assumptions. For example, "education is never finished", "you will spend

part of all the rest of your life attending some form of school", "you are welcome to leave and return as you see fit","providing you fulfill a variety of pedagogical demands". An easy development from this position is that the early years of schooling concentrate on the matter of learning how to learn. They would attend primarily to the basic language of learning, speech, numbers, writing, visual arts, etc., but they would also develop ability in the learner to learn under a variety of circumstances and conditions; on part-time basis; at home using a variety of media; and in informal settings, rather than suggesting that the only way to learn is full-time attandence at school, with a teacher and some form of text. Our elementary schools have moved a long way in this direction but what is badly needed is a concept that would legitimize and elaborate these practices.

B.- The result of such an attitude shift would be also to make the elementary and secondary system more open and welcoming to individuals outside of the custodial ages who needed the prescribed skills associated with these levels of education. A maximization of school plant on an eighteen or twenty-four hour basis along with other resources, the development of a tri-semester system, the maximum use of counselling and guidance services would result from this step. One major improvement would be related to the variation of circumstance under which learning takes place, since the young would at least mingle with all ages engaged in learning in the schools instead of being so heavily segregated - a source of a good many of problems associated with the generation gap.

C.- The end of the last-chance philosophy presupposes a school system offering a variety of skills and opportunities and a variety of levels of these skills, available on some basis to everyone in the society. If the elementary or secondary school teacher knows that the person can freely leave and re-enter, and the person knows it, a wholly different atmosphere will pervade the whole of education. If the system was satisfied that any child under fourteen was being properly supervised by the parents, then no further demands would be made. Whether the formal curriculum relative to the age group was being followed or not would not matter. The child could return at any time later to pursue the proper level of skill. Evidence for the swift assimilation of knowledge and skill by individuals personally motivated to do so is quite overwhelming. Programs that take two to three years with the young, and which include a whole range of custodial activities and other special arrangements for the young are in terms of specific skills accomplished in weeks or months by older individuals acting from personal motives.

D.- Two concerns can emerge at this stage. That we will lose earlier those difficult individuals who are important to us but seemingly impossible to reach within the normal bounds of curriculum. The important part of this issue to acknowledge is that we lose them anyway. What's more they leave the schools as soon as possible with a combined sense of defeat and frustration that takes years to overcome. They do not see the school as a "helping" or "supporting" institution for them. A school that understood their temporary difficulties with the setting and the curriculum, which made it easy for them to leave on the assurance that they can come back when they are ready, would in fact loose

fewer of them either for the society as a whole or more important for themselves as developing individuals. Secondly it is argued that the great assimilating function of the "common school", the establishing of a common base for our society would no longer be fulfilled. This is long since past anyway. While the school remained a primary source of information and stimulation, while information followed a pattern of "scarcity" this was true. It is no longer true. The mass media, the patterns of an industrial society now perform the task of communalization far better than the school. Information is no longer in short supply, and the schools have been trailing for years as primary or even very stimulating sources of it. If anything, it can be argued that the formal school system ought to be providing for individual diversity and development rather than a sort of cultural conditioning.

E.- It can be further argued that such relaxation on compulsory attendance - and there is a good argument for abandoning all compulsory education laws - would throw out on the streets all sorts of wandering young without jobs and without prospects of them. However contrary evidence suggests that there are all sorts of non-legal pressures to keep the young in school, probably too many. Most would remain, some, many of them getting little from attendance would leave and return when they are ready, and the entire attitude within the schools would change.

F.- The ease of exit and entrance would of course mean a number of administrative changes. However before dealing with them let me urge that such a practice would go a long way towards solving the practical issues of over-building, over-crowding, and over-expending. To stretch the present process of formal schooling over a possible lifetime is to stretch the use of resource both individual and social over the same period. It means access to quite different

sorts of facilities, now in existence but under-used, access to different sources of teaching, and access to different sources of financing. There is now no real reason why certain educational achievements associated with the termination of the secondary phase of education and the post-secondary must be associated with a certain age. While there appear to be matters related to the passage through puberty that are reflected on both the custodial and pedagogical side, nevertheless the vast majority of matters dealt with now in our school systems, and in the future are things that can be accomplished at nearly any age, provided a reasonable grounding in the skills of learning has been provided.

3.- We have already mentioned the importance of a move to a three semester system of schooling at all levels. The present time dimensions of elementary and secondary schooling in Canada are totally arbitrary and inconvenient. How they arose is a matter of speculation, since some doubt has been cast on the "harvest" theory so long offered as an explanation. The present eight month, day-time schedule has no bearing on what is taught since the subject and books are adapted to periods rather than the other way round. It is obviously much too long to maintain attention to a specific subject, and even to maintain cordial relations between teacher and taught. It does not fit modern industrial time-sequences, where a fifteen week leave for an employee is quite manageable while eight months in order to complete a unit is quite impossible. It no longer fits the seasons in Canada since winter vacations and holidays are growing as common as those in summer, and some parents are not able to insist on one or the other. It bears no relationship

to employment for students, since we are presently dumping a larger and larger number of untrained students on a summer economy with less and less capacity for using them. The result is either busy-work, expensive and fraudulent employment, or boredom and social unrest. On the other hand to leave expensive capital facilities unused for sixteen hours of every twenty-four, and for four months a year, or to fill them with anything that comes along to reduce the overhead is equally senseless. A shift to a variety of time spans depending upon the specific educational task, but based on a formal pattern of three fifteen week terms a year, would revolutionize the educational system at not much greater cost - certainly no greater cost than the new resource that would become accessible to it.

4.- A system of continuing education then would provide increasing flexibility as the learner matured in terms of exit and access. Provided the learner conformed to the pedagogical criteria for any single unit of endeavour he or she would be free to enter or leave on a part or full-time basis within a twelve month period as well as over such a period. What would be demanded would be a much greater concentration by the system on support services now generally disseminated inefficiently throughout the system. It would mean centrally located accessible guidance and counselling since the number of choices made by each individual would increase. It would mean far superior information services available outside the operating system, but which computers now make technically quite possible. It would mean dealing

with a much greater variety in times, standards of teaching and teachers, and physical circumstances. None of these things is either impossible or very difficult if we wish to make such a system work.

5.- A system of continuing education would base its theoretical framework on "teaching" rather than teachers. However you designate such a person or role, as resource-person, leader, facilitator, does not matter. It is a definable role that can be identified in terms of the frequency with which it must be played by someone. Our present system identifies "the Teacher" and forces us to design the system around the existence of so many formally employed teachers, whose particular skills may or may not by relevant to a changing circumstance. I am not necessarily suggesting that we will need fewer of those than we have now, though we may. What is true is that seen from the point of view of the formal system we have not nearly enough of such people to accomplish all the teaching that needs to be done, nor it is conceivable that we ever will have if we insist on the formal definition. However, in a specialized society of wide technical diversity and expertise, there are many many people who like to teach and can teach very well, but do not wish to be teachers in the formal sense of the word. With different administrative practices, careful supervision, individuals teaching on this basis can supply many of the needs for teaching that we presently encounter and will continue to encounter on a larger and larger scale.

All the argument of freedom of access and exit should apply to teaching and teachers, under careful administrative direction. I would like to add here a comment on a previous argument about the freedom of teaching and learning. The Community Colleges seems to me to be particularly appropriate institutions in which to experiment with this concept, one that is foreign to the formal system with its formally designated and certified teachers, but one that has been the vital essence of the informal or adult system. In growing more flexible and inclusive, formal institutions largely through night classes, extension programs and the like, have extended their offerings to more and more individuals whom are welcomed as students. However they have tended to define and control quite rigidly not only what will be taught and who will teach it. The "continuing institution" offers such continuity over both what is to be taught and who will teach it, by allowing many more teachers, and groups choosing their own directions to have access to the facilities. This is not to suggest a sort of anarchy, but rather to indicate the need for altering our administrative controls and processes to concentrate on the forms of learning rather than content and personel.

6.- The financial problems which now beset the present formal system relate to a variety of characteristics of that system that would alter with the introduction of a concept and system of continuing education. Whether the overall cost of the two systems that now exist would be less in total is a

matter of speculation, though it probably would be. However the total cost is of less significance than how costly the system seems to the society, and the direct relationship between cost and benificiary. A reorganization of expenditure is of course presumed in this analysis with more efficient use of existing educational facilities and resources than is presently possible. In fact, with the exception of the development of some specialized facilities across Canada, for example residential centers, the likelihood is that no vast increase in capital expenditures, such as that now being undertaken by the conventionally conceived colleges need be envisaged. The use of part-time teachers, part-time students, and the dispersed teaching and learning facilities already available would be maximized.

I should at this point acknowledge two striking characteristics of the adult system as it presently exists. First it makes a much better use of a combination of public and private money than is possible in the public system as presently conceived. While all money may seem the same, in fact it is not. Private money, which included tuition fees, organization funds, foundation funds, corporate funds, etc., all of which are blended with public money in formal institutions, manpower schemes, and the like is subject to different controls than are public funds. Because it is essentially not preparatory in nature with long delayed goals, the adult system is able to relate immediate interests much more closely to realizable goals and thus relate the expenditure or private funds more closely to those same goals, whether they are individual or organizational.

The public system, is based almost entirely on tax revenues by which the individual is required to finance his or someone else's activities, or the activities of his or someone else's children indiscriminantly. This sort of income is always subject to different sorts of freedoms and constraints than private funds. While none of these things is necessarily bad there there is limit to their influence in purely financial terms, and the learning needs of the population simply cannot be accomodated by the automatic extension of these restraints. The school dominated, classroom centered, full-time teacher oriented, eight hour, ten month, system is an expensive method of educating. It may for certain purposes be useful when the learners are young and dependent, but it is apparent that it no longer relates to either financial or educational realities. The advantages of the system of continuing education as I am describing it, are that it would release more people with more private funds for periods that are manageable within present developing employment practices. It would also in my opinion reduce the unit cost considerably particularly in the areas of general education.

In short the system would work on the basis that all citizens are entitled to a certain level of achievement in education at public expense, which they may undertake at any time of their lives subject to their own circumstances, and to their willingness to subject themsleves to the discipline of the particular area of endeavour. Once the principle is established, then the

particular level of attainment, measured preferably by achievement but in some cases by a certain accumulated period of time can be set by the particular society. The educational resources might insist that an individual would have to apply ahead of time, and perhaps wait for a certain period before a vacancy became available. After the basic level of right has been used up the individual may be subject to a variety of formulas - he may be required to pay part or all of the tuition fee, or he may be subsidized entirely depending upon his and the society's need. We are in fact observing all these practices at present yet without any recognizable systematic approach or application. Such a system, apparent in its ramifications from the very beginning will produce far more capacity for planning in the individual, far more flexibility and reduction of anxiety in the face of change, and far more resilience in the society itself. Instead of massive application of educational resources on the very young with vague hopes of long term benefits for both the individual and the society, what will result will be a system subject to planning and alteration in response to short and long term goals, both individual and collective.

7.- What I am proposing is a system of easy entry and exit, but one that is subject to certain standards of performance. What we must rid ourselves of is the conception that learning is somehow not work, and that you are somehow less fully participating citizen, less deserving, when you are a student. The responsibility of choosing what and when you will

learn is a mature responsibility and one that we must both covet and support among our citizens. To support it we must create a system that not only allows it to happen but nourishes such behaviour by encouraging easy access and just as easy withdrawal. With the modern tools of managing wide ranges of units of information, the administrative problems of such a system are not particularly difficult. What is at stake is a change in attitude.

8.- I have for good reason emphasized the development of a system that puts a premium on the operation of individual choice about learning as early in the life of the individual as possible. It is a curious irony that even within a compulsory, formal elementary system of schooling the principle of the importance of choice is revealed by the immense amount of time spent trying to create small choices within a system not subject to them. By and large men cannot be coerced into learning. They can be bullied and overpersuaded. but fear is dangerous motive, and its main result is to create in the learner a loathing for the teacher, the subject, and the school. In fact it cripples any further likelihood of learning. Men's attention must be won, and they must choose as freely as possible what and when they learn. But while we must create a structure within which individual choice is maximized, this does not prevent, in fact it enhances the potential for leadership in the society, since it immeasurably increases the resources for it to function. It may be true that "he who pays the piper, calls the tune" but he does so only if

the piper knows the tune and understands how to play it. If neither condition is true, then the problem is one of another order which requires more than the brute power of purchase. It requires the piper being willing to learn the tune, and knowing how to go about learning it, and having the time and facilities and circumstances under which to do so. More and more the development of a complex society like Canada is a matter of pipers learning an relearning new and old tunes, few of which can be learned while young, though the skill on the pipes might be.

9.- I have in this presentation made no use of footnotes, references to other countries or special experience, etc. All of these references will either be familiar to the investigators or easily accessible from such agencies as the Canadian Association for Adult Education. The evidence that people do and will learn throughout their entire lives is indisputable. The awareness of the potential of such learning, both individual and collective dawns only slowly. The great society of the future is the society that is able to stimulate learning in all of its citizens, and which carries at its core the system that supports it.

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